

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 13767

BEIRUT PASS DAMASCUS AND BAGHDAD

GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, FR, XF

SUBJECT: FRENCH GOVERNMENT STATEMENT ON ISRAELI-SYRIAN
DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT

REF: PARIS 13501

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED: FOLLOWING JUNE 5 MEETING OF
COUNCIL OF MINISTERS, INTERIM FRENCH GOVERNMENT SPOKES-
MAN MINISTER OF STATE, MINISTER OF INTERIOR PONIATOWSKI
SAID IN REPLY TO A PRESS QUERY THAT THE STATEMENT ON
DISENGAGEMENT QUOTED IN REFTEL "EMANATED FROM RESPONSIBLE
POLITICAL CIRCLES" BUT THAT IT HAD NOT BEEN THE SUBJECT
OF CONSULTATIONS WITHIN THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS. HE
ALSO SAID THAT IT REPRESENTED "A REMINDER ('RAPPEL') BY
THE(MINISTRY OF) FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE FRENCH POLICY
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FOLLOWED UP TO THE PRESENT".

2. ON THE SAME DAY AS PONIATOWSKI'S REMARKS, ISRAELI AMBASSADOR TO FRANCE BEN-NATHAN IMPLICITLY CRITICIZED THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT DISENGAGEMENT STATEMENT DURING A CEREMONY ORGANIZED BY THE FRENCH-ISRAELI ALLIANCE. "WE ARE TOLD ABOUT THE ASPIRATIONS OR THE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE", HE SAID, "THEN WE ARE TOLD ABOUT THE RESOLUTION OF THE COMMON MARKET NINE OF LAST NOVEMBER 6, PROMULGATED UNDER THE THREAT OF OIL BLACK-MAIL. BUT WHO ARE THESE PALESTINIANS? IF IT IS THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN RECOGNIZED AS THE 'ONLY LEGITIMATE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE' AT THE LAST ALGIERS SUMMIT, THERE ARE EXTREMISTS AND MODERATES AMONG THEM...AS FOR THE MODERATES, IF YASSER ARAFAT IS TO BE BELIEVED, THEY WISH TO ESTABLISH IN TRANSJORDAN AN ARMED STATE. THIS WOULD BE ONLY A FIRST STEP, WE ARE TOLD. THERE WOULD THUS BE A SECOND STEP: THAT OF THE DESTRUCTION OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL". END UNCLASSIFIED

3. BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL: COMMENT: IN A SUBSEQUENT OFF-THE-RECORD CONVERSATION WITH NEWSMEN, PONIATOWSKI REPORTEDLY STATED FLATLY THAT PRESIDENT GISCARD HAD NOT APPROVED THE STATEMENT BEFORE IT WAS ISSUED MAY 31. IT APPEARS LIKELY THAT IT WAS THE HANDIWORK OF QUAI OFFICIALS WHO WORK ON MIDDLE EASTERN AFFAIRS AND IT IS POSSIBLE THAT EVEN THE NEW FOREIGN MINISTER DID NOT APPROVE IT. NONETHELESS, WE QUESTION THE IMPLICATION OF PONIATOWSKI'S COMMENTS THAT THERE WILL BE A CHANGE IN FRENCH POLICY TOWARDS THE NEAR EAST. WHILE GISCARD'S GOVERNMENT MAY IN THE FUTURE, AS IT DID THROUGH PONIATOWSKI'S REMARKS, TRY TO CREATE THE APPEARANCE OF SHIFTING FRENCH POLICY TOWARDS DECREASED SUPPORT FOR ARAB VIEWS AND GREATER UNDERSTANDING OF ISRAELI THESES, WE BELIEVE ANY SIGNIFICANT SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE TO BE UNLIKELY IN THE NEAR TERM. END CONFIDENTIAL
IRWIN

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